

# Soldier Summit



Blackberry  
Brockenridge

Motel where we found  
7 soldier monument in coal shed

~~California Ave  
Coff Creek  
415/41m~~

## **Oregon Trail**

During the 1840s and 1850s the Oregon Trail, which stretched about 3,200 km (about 2,000 mi) from Independence, Mo., to Fort Vancouver (on the site of modern Vancouver, Wash.), carried thousands of American pioneers to the rich farmland of the Willamette Valley in the Oregon country. The main trail ran west and then northwest to Fort Kearney (in present Nebraska), then west again along the Platte and North Platte rivers to Fort Laramie (now in Wyoming). It went through the Rockies via South Pass, turned north to Fort Hall, followed the Snake River to Fort Boise (both in what is now Idaho), and then moved northwest to the Columbia River. The trail's last stretch was the Columbia itself, usually navigated by raft to Fort Vancouver.

Explorers, fur trappers, and traders opened parts of the route during the first third of the 19th century. A group of missionary families, led by Marcus WHITMAN, opened new stretches of the trail in 1836. Reports from these and other Protestant missions and from the Roman Catholic Pierre DE SMET encouraged others to make the trip to Oregon to establish farms. The resulting "Oregon fever" broke out in the spring of 1843, when about 1,000 men, women, and children gathered at Independence with their wagons to make the 6-month trek. By 1846 more than 6,000 people had used the trail. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 reduced the flow of traffic to Oregon, and by the 1860s use of the trail had dwindled considerably.

The pioneers organized themselves into small companies, and strict discipline was required because of the perilous nature of the route. Indian attacks, cholera epidemics, grass fires, storms, and floods were among the many hazards. The trail passed through stretches of barren country, and people and animals alike frequently faced fatigue and hunger.

**W. Eugene Hollon**

**Bibliography:** Byers, R., *The Linchpin: The Oregon Trail in 1843*, new ed. (1984); Dorris, Jonathan, *The Oregon Trail* (1919; repr. 1973); Franzwa, Gregory M., *Maps of the Oregon Trail*, ed. by Arielle North, 2d ed., (1982), and *Oregon Trail Revisited*, 4th ed. (1988); Ghent, W. J., *The Road to Oregon* (1929; repr. 1971); Lavender, David, *Westward Vision: The Story of the Oregon Trail* (1963; repr. 1985); Parkman, Francis, *The Oregon Trail*, ed. by David Levine (1982).

## Early Stores Around Wasatch

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Store: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Owners: \_\_\_\_\_

Time in operation: \_\_\_\_\_

Merchandise: \_\_\_\_\_

### SOLDIERS SUMMIT

Soldiers Summit was the only town in Wasatch County which was outside the Provo Valley area. This small town had its beginning about 1862 in the midst of tragedy. "Soldiers from Johnston's Army, that had been stationed at Camp Floyd in Utah County, were recalled to aid in the Civil War. Desiring to return to the East as quickly as possible, many of the soldiers started up Spanish Fork Canyon along the pass between the Colorado Basin and the Great Basin. Caught in a blizzard common to the high mountain country, they died from exposure. The bodies were buried near the pass at a spot which became known as Soldiers Summit in their honor.

"Years later, as railroads began operating in the state, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad found it advantageous to establish a traffic control point at the summit. Extra locomotives were needed to pull the trains over the pass, and the crews that operated these engines were based at Soldiers Summit. A roundhouse was built there to be used in turning the locomotives around, and the area began to flourish."<sup>28</sup>

The town was incorporated as a city in 1921 at which time it had a population of more than one thousand. Businesses were established as well as a school. An LDS ward, which was part of the Nebo Stake of Utah County, was established as well as a Baptist church. During the boom years, a wax mine was discovered just east of the town and the refined wax was shipped east. Later years brought changes in railroad operation with the development of more powerful diesel engines and also the diversion of traffic to other routes. This brought about the downfall of Soldiers Summit. Today only a few families reside there. 290

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